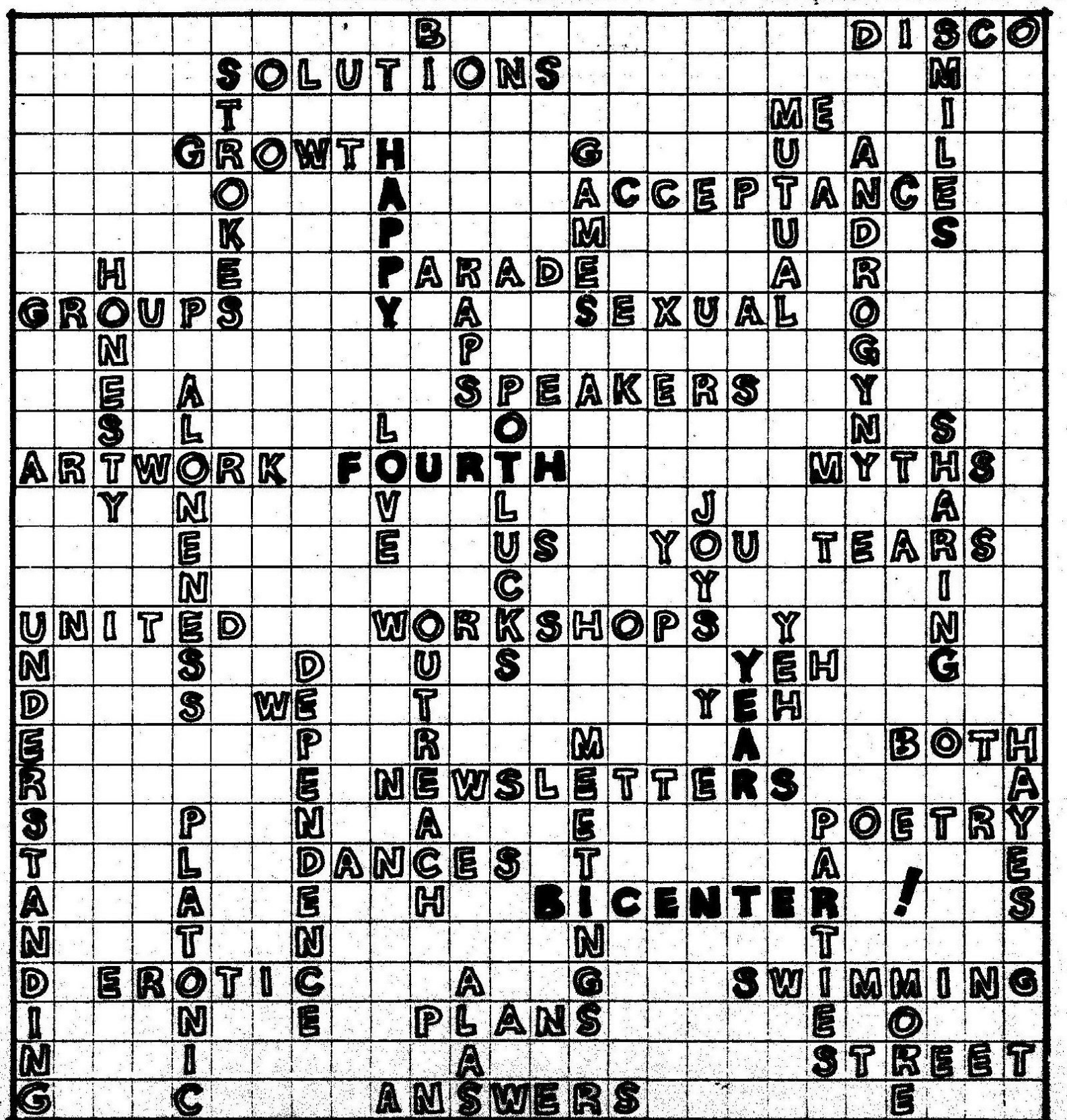
THE BI-MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Bisexual Center

Volume 3, Number 5 6 September/October 1979



HELP WANTED

Bay Area Members: want to make new friends, find out how your Bi Center works, and help the Center out, as well? Volunteer for an hour or so every month: help us staff the office, write up membership cards, or collect donations at a potluck! We need your help badly, and you'll enjoy getting to know the people who really make the Bi Center run!

Give us a call at 922-2300, and leave your name and phone number. Please help!

3RD ANNIVERSARY

We've done it! Another year! And to celebrate our 3rd anniversary we've designed this issue's cover as a crossword puzzle. Included in it are many of the Center's characteristics and accomplishments. We invite you to complete the puzzle with as many words as you feel suitable. Xerox your entry and send it to the Center no later than October 20. The entry judged most complete will be printed in the November/December issue and the winner given a free year's membership. Good luck! And have fun!

All materials submitted for publication become the property of the Bisexual Center and are subject to revision and/or editing at the discretion of the Newsletter Committee. Opinions expressed in such material are those of the originator(s), and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Bisexual Center.

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this issue

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membership

$6 -	Full-time Student, Unemployed, Retired
$12 -	Regular
$13-100	Contributing
$101-1000	Sustaining

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How did you hear about the Bi Center?_____

☐ Check this box if you want the newsletter by 1st class mail rather than bulk rate & please add $1.50 to your check for this service.

Letters

Dear Bisexual Center,

On a recent trip to San Francisco, I called your office only to find a machine on the other end...the days you were open did not coincide with the days I was there.

I am an unexpressed bisexual living in a town where such things are only whispered about. I know that I ought to come out, but feel so alone...that I don't know what to do. Do you have...something to help me feel good about myself and courageous enough to act on my feelings? ...I know that my life is only half as full as it should be...

R.P., Richmond, Virginia

HELP!!!

I feel like a fish out of water.

Most of the gay crowd can't accept me because I'm married and want to stay married. They can't understand how I can love women.

I have to keep my mouth shut around straights or they think I'm queer.

I.E.S., Wheat Ridge, Colorado

I am writing to ask for any information about male bisexuality. I'm not sure how your organization works, but I would appreciate any CONFIDENTIAL information... I know I sound really paranoid, but I think you know where I'm coming from. I would like to add that I think you are just great for having a center like this in the first place where people can get the information they need...

Y.F.P., Phoenix, Arizona

...It has taken most of my life to come to a full realization that what I am is neither completely straight nor completely gay and that this is all right. Sometimes I think those who are definitely in one camp or the other are more fortunate, as I have found distrust and disdain from both straights and gays because of my bisexual nature.... The old joke is that being bisexual increases your chances of getting a date for Saturday night; but the truth is that it also increases your chances of not getting a date, as well as increasing your frustration....

D.J., Austin, Texas

Dear Editors,

Help! I'm married, but my career takes me all over the country for long periods of time...I've had several homosexual experiences and find them hard to take except by calling myself weird names. I don't feel queer...I want someone so badly to love me and someone to love...and not be used as a sex object only which I find most men in my life have done. How can I find another female? Doesn't anybody out there care more than only sexually? What about feelings, too?

...Way back in my past one of my teachers and I became very involved only to end with no explanation. I never knew what I did wrong and have never gotten over the total rejection.

Are there any places or people here on the East Coast I can go to or meet?...

C.B., Annapolis, Maryland

I am a female bisexual law student from Gary, Indiana. (You didn't think anyone was still from Gary, Indiana, did you?)

I am very interested in your center. I have just recently moved to San Francisco and would like to participate....

K.C., San Francisco

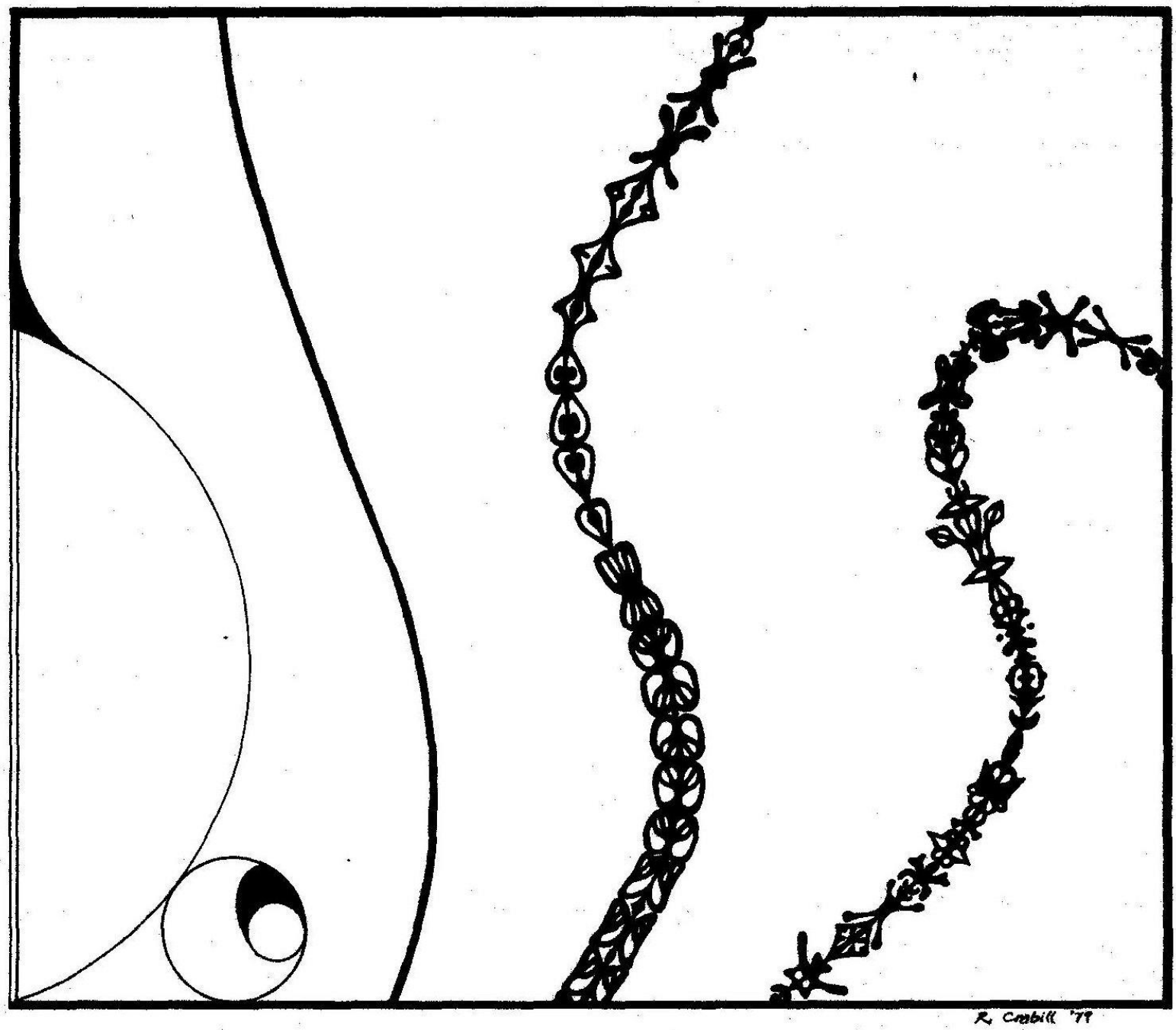


ILLUSTRATION BY ROBIN CRABILL

CLUBS AND CENTERS: A BRIEF DIRECTORY

The following organizations provide information about bisexuality and other subjects related to sexuality and sexual identity. Some provide counseling and/or referral services; some provice social activities.

One of the largest and oldest of these organizations is our "sibling" in New York:

The Bisexual Forum
P.O. Box 686
New York, NY 10028
Phone: (212) 988-7626 (tape)
988-8401 (eves.)

Dr. Alan Rockway, Clinical Director of the Transperience Center, was a co-author of the Dade County (Florida) Gay Rights Ordinance:

Transperience Center, Inc.
2898 Biscayne Boulevard
Miami, FL 33137

Chicago area--just forming now. Contact:

Grant S. Hornston
P.O. Box a3330
Chicago, Illinois 606970

A newly-formed organization in Southern California:

The Bisexual Center of
Southern California, Arete
P.O. Box 4273
Whittier, CA 90605
Phone: (213) 693-2316

Also in Southern California:

The Androgyny Center
4869 Santa Monica St., Suite J
San Diego, California
(or, P.O. Box 7429
San Diego, CA 92107)
Phone: (714) 223-5327

Hawaii:

Sexual Identity Center
2457 Kanealii Avenue
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

A BISEXUAL ODYSSEY

Copyright 1979, by Doug Friedman

Debbie Willis's keenly perceptive and revealing article, reprinted in the July/August 1979 Bi-Monthly, struck several empathetic chords in me. I've been inspired to write my own story of developing consciousness as a "bi-intimate" male.

I've had sexual experiences with males and females at least as far back as age three. Due to my internalizing society's homophobic oppression, however, I used to tell myself that I was really "O.K." (meaning "heterosexual"), since I related to girls (later women), and that my experiences with boys (later men) "didn't really count." I was afraid to see myself as gay because of the abhorrent connotations which patriarchal society puts on gays. I didn't think much about bisexuality/bi-intimacy; I'd heard from friends and from reading that bisexuality was a fence-sitting, transitional copout, not a real and valid space of its own. Some of my male gay-identified friends and lovers asserted that, since I could "make it" and have relationships with women, I should try to see myself as straight: they had experienced many painful hurts because of their loving men and consequent isolation from mainstream society.

Labeling myself "straight" didn't ring true to me. Confused and scared as I was, I found myself wanting to share more with close male friends and still feeling strongly attracted to women.

In a couple of my teen experiences with men, I had been sexually assaulted, leaving me afraid of men. I had wanted to be physically close, to share kissing and hugging--acceptance--as well as stimulating conversation. I hadn't wanted to be hurt, yet, afterwards, I did a classic "blaming the victim" routine on myself. I thought I must have led them on--why else would those seemingly nice men persist in hurting me? I now know better. In this society, socialized male sexuality (of whatever orientation or preference) is rapist at its core. There was nothing wrong with my wanting to be close and affectionate. That didn't license those men to hurt me (as they knew they were doing, but pretended not to notice). True male sexuality is loving and nurturant, but we males must first work through the socialized crap we've internalized to reclaim this important aspect of our humanness.

I became more involved in feminism during my early twenties, reading everything I could find, talking with women friends, participating in male consciousness-raising/support groups and men-and-masculinity conferences. I realized as I continued to relate to women and men that I really was bisexual--my desire for uniting with some people of both sexes had gone on for far too many years to be "fence-sitting." I didn't want to have to choose between one half of the human race or the other: I wanted to be me.

I wanted to be sexually intimate with some of my closest freinds of whatever gender. Many of my closest female friends identified as lesbians, some as bisexual, some as straight. They and my male friends (most of whom identified as gay) were very supportive of me and didn't try to make me choose a gay or straight identity. They accepted and loved me for the person I was.

When I came out as bisexual to my brother five years ago, I felt deep relief. He too accepted me and didn't seek to change me. I was proudly open with all of my friends and didn't hide my sexuality from classmates or co-workers. Yet I sometimes felt compelled to overemphasize the gay aspects of my life with gay men and lesbians who I didn't know well, whether I met them politically or socially. I feared they wouldn't accept me as I was nor trust me if they knew I related to both sexes. I also deeply wanted them to know I was their ally, and de-emphasizing my heterosexuality seemed to be the way to do it.

My long-term woman lover and I had an open relationship, and she was very supportive of my loving some of my close male friends. It was threatening to her, however, when I made love with other women. I also felt more scared when she was sexual with another man, although I did my best to support her in loving men and women. I think it was because I'd been taught to compete with men, and feared that she'd like another man better than me, and then leave me. Especially if--Goddess forbid!--he had a bigger penis. We worked through these insecurities as we realized the other wasn't

running away and that we shared something rich and special with each other: ourselves. We found that however much we were attracted to someone else, it didn't diminish our love and respect for each other.

A big breakthrough came almost two years ago, when I came out as bisexual to my father. I realized that it was the last big barrier to my coming completely out of the closet. My mother had died years before, and I was "out" to everyone else I interacted with. I worked through my fear of losing my father's love with co-counseling--peer counseling which has been very effective in my overcoming fears and blocks. My father had been trained as a Freudian psychiatrist, and I knew he believed that gays (and therefore bisexuals) could be fine people, but he thought that they were really sick, victims of arrested development, and should become heterosexual and therefore "healthier."

I tried to prepare him by thanking him and my mother for teaching me to always trust my own experience and not accept the lies and/or preachings of others, regardless of their positions or roles, if my experience showed me something different. I expressed my thanks to him for therefore enabling me to not repress my love for half the human race. Although it was hard for him at first (he wondered if he'd failed, if I was promiscuous, if this meant I was really gay and would never have children, if I could really be happy), he gradually accepted it. As time passed, he realized that I was happier than I'd ever been and was doing what I wanted to do. Our love and respect for each other has grown enormously. The weight of fear, and the barriers which had been between us for years, have been lifted.

I've recently moved to San Francisco from rural Massachusetts. I don't have any current lovers who are geographically close, and this feels O.K. right now. I don't want casual sex, and I feel good about myself, building an identity separate from being part of a couple. My commitment to feminism and to socialist change continues to grow, and I'm able to give myself gifts which I couldn't give before.

One of the criticisms leveled at bisexual people by some gay-identified people is that when "push comes to shove" we'll "pass"--we'll take heterosexual privilege, and therefore cannot be counted on. I've sought to root out in myself this act of colluding with oppressors. I believe it's critically important for bisexual men to support and stand up for lesbians, gay men, and women. I think it goes even further than that: I believe we must interrupt all oppression, regardless of who the target may be.

I see that the oppression which bisexual people, lesbians and gay men face stems from the same process which oppresses the very young and old, working class people, women, physically-different people, racial, ethnic, and religious minorities--in fact, everyone who's oppressed by mainstream culture. I believe that the exploiting, capitalist, patriarchal culture seeks to maintain and increase ruling-class power by keeping each of the oppressed groups fighting each other for scraps without focusing on the real enemy. Now, many people in all oppressed groups are becoming aware of this "divide-and-conquer" strategy, and we are beginning to ally with each other effectively. This alliance is particularly important for bisexual/bi-intimate people: we are a relatively small group, and would not be not be able to achieve our own liberation without working together with other allies.

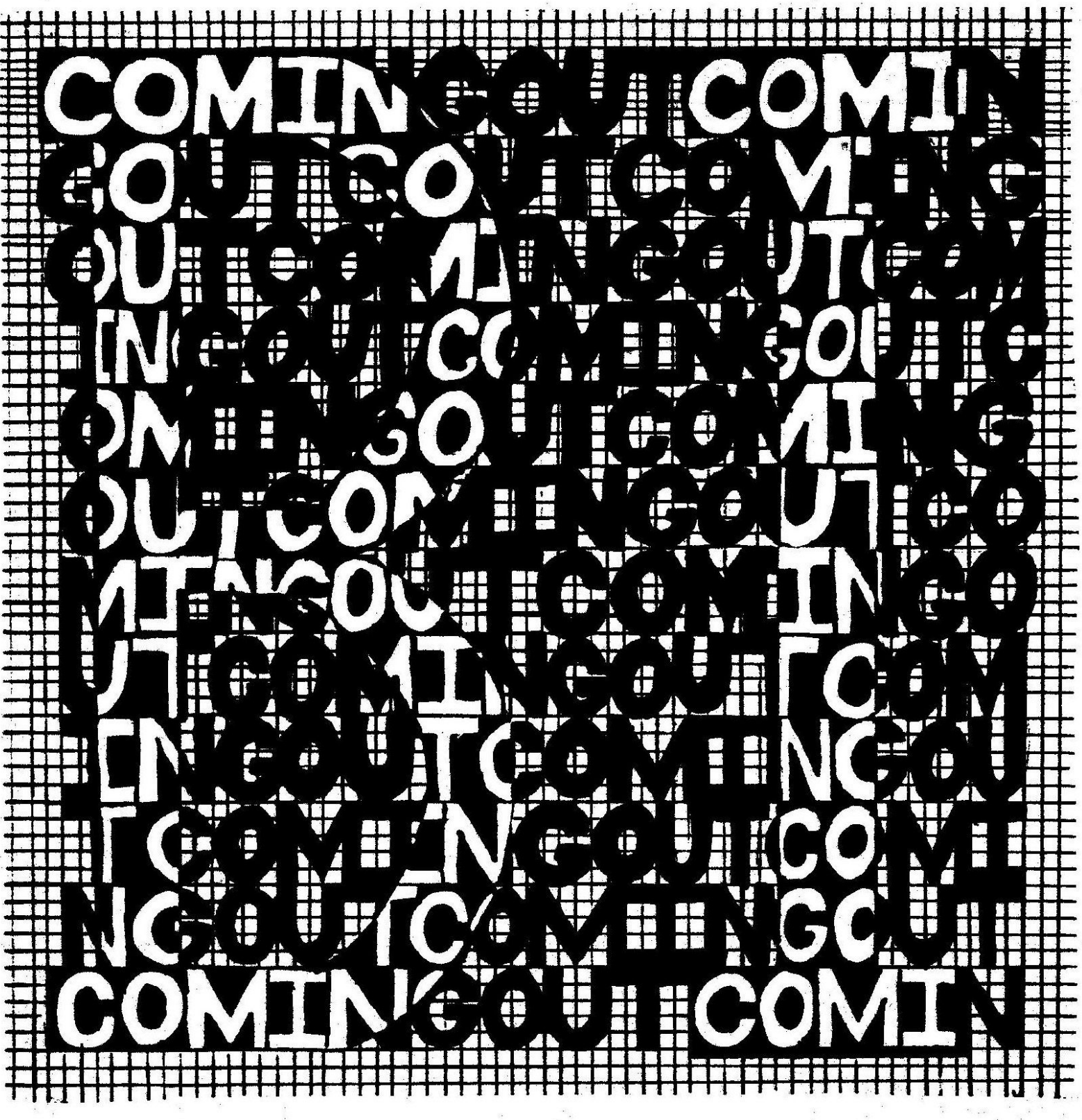
I see myslef as a freedom fighter, dedicated to ending all these oppressions, enjoying myself, and sharing with others. I'll continue to make some mistakes, no doubt, but I'll continue to correct them as I learn more.

We <u>can</u> end oppression and the rape of our planet. And the first step is accepting and loving ourselves, as we reclaim our own power.

SFSI TRAINING

San Francisco Sex Information is offering a training course designed to provide you with accurate information on all aspects of human sexuality. This course can expand and enrich your relationship with yourself and others. It has also proven extremely valuable as a first training experience for potential sex counselors and educators. The fee is $250.00, but if you choose to share what you learn with others there is a reduced fee of $90.00 plus a commitment to volunteer at the switchboard 3 hours weekly for six months. The current training course starts in late September.

For more information, call 665-7300, Monday through Friday, 3 to 9 PM.


COMING OUT COMING OUT COMING OUT

Groups and Workshops

DISCOVERING YOUR LOVING TOUCH: A MASSAGE WORKSHOP

Experience the joys of massage and nudity in a safe, non-sexual environment. During this one-day workshop, we will explore the healing powers available to each of us by developing a sensitive, loving touch. Emphasis will be on learning to give a full body massage. Meditation and guided imagery will be used to open up our sensitivity to both ourselves and others.

Led by Jan Winitz, who has been developing his own loving touch over the past four years. He is a certified masseur.

Cost: $15.00 for Bi Center members
$18.00 for non-members

Time: Saturday, September 22, 1979
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Place: The Bi Center

Preregistration is essential, as the workshop is limited to 12 persons. To preregister, send a check for $5.00 to Jan Winitz, c/o The Bi Center, 1757 Hayes St., San Francisco, CA 94117. For more information, call Jan at 234-6469.

COMING OUT BI

The Bi Center is offering what we consider a unique program: an opportunity to explore and share your feelings, concerns, questions, and experiences about bisexuality in the context of a safe and supportive group of people. We will take a look at some of the myths that float around about bisexuality--and compare them to our actual feelings and experiences.

The two-day workshop includes the depiction, in various media, of some individuals' experiences of same- and other-sex sexuality. Some structured exercises also help provide an in-depth opportunity to focus on our own issues concerning bisexuality and our sexuality in general.

Cost: $40.00 for Bi Center members
$50.00 for non-members

Time: Saturday, October 6, and
Sunday, October 7
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM, each day

Place: The Bi Center

Facilitators: Marilyn King and David Lourea.

Preregistration is essential. To preregister, send a check for $10.00 to Marilyn King, 625 Ashbury St. #12, San Francisco, CA 94117. Deadline for preregistration is September 30.

LOSING YOUR PAST, FINDING YOUR PAST
A SPECIAL DAY FOR THE BISEXUAL COMMUNITY

Do you ever feel sad because dreams you used to cherish when you were younger seem to have slipped away? Are you aware of blocks from your past which may be interfering with your living your life as you want to? Unfinished business with someone in your past, or holding on to several old hurts, can often produce a reluctance to express yourself as freely and spontaneously as you would like.

This workshop will provide an opportunity to begin to identify and examine some of these issues--parts of your past you'd like to reclaim, and parts of your past you'd like to let go of. We can't work through our past in one day, but the purpose of this unique workshop is to provide a place to start--to ask the questions, and begin looking for the answers.

Cost: $20.00 for Bi Center members
$25.00 for non-members

Time: Saturday, November 3
10:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Place: The Bi Center

Facilitators: David Lourea and Marilyn King.

Preregistration is essential. To preregister, send a check for $5.00 or the entire amount to Marilyn King, 625 Ashbury #12, San Francisco, CA 94117, by October 26.

WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUP

Women who have identified as lesbians and who are involved with or considering being involved with men must deal with special issues. Rejection and isolation from the lesbian community, new sexual feelings, and struggles with sexism within a relationship are some of these issues.

A support group to share these experiences is starting in late September on Wednesday nights, at the Bi Center.

For more information, call Sage Bergstrom at 282-6239.

Tuesday Rap Group

Our Tuesday night drop-in discussion group's emphasis is on getting to know one another in a casual rap rather than getting into "heavies" which can only be dealt with in on-going groups. If you are interested in knowing more about the Bi-Center and meeting other people, drop in on a Tuesday night at 7:30 pm.

Community Bulletin Board

OFFICE HOURS

The Bi Center is open to the public on:
Tuesdays, from 5:30 to 7:00 PM
Thursdays, from 7:00 to 10:00 PM
Give us a phone call, or stop by, look the place over, and get acquainted!

NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

All contributions to the Bi-Monthly, including announcements, etc., must be in by the start of the Pasteup session. All articles longer than 50 words must be in by Layout day. The Planning session will be held in East Bay this time; all other sessions will be at the Bi Center, and your help is badly needed!

LAYOUT: Sunday, October 14, 11 AM-4 PM
PASTEUP: Sunday, October 21, 11 AM-4 PM

3RD ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Let's celebrate the Bi Center's Third Anniversary! Join us at the Center for a real blast on Saturday, September 29, from 9:00 PM to exhaustion! B.Y.O., and we'll ask for the usual donation: $2.00/members, $3.00/non-members.

POTLUCK

You are warmly invited to another of our friendly potluck parties at the Bi Center on Saturday, September 15, from 7:30 to 11:00 PM. Please bring food and/or drink to share.

GAMES NIGHT

--is back again!. Bring your favorite games to share--Scrabble, Backgammon, cards, Monopoly, whatever--and we'll have some games here, too. Friday, September 21, from 7:30 to 10:30 PM. And again on Thursday, October 11, from 7:30-10:30 PM. Please bring drinks and snacks to share.

HALLOWEEN PARTIES

The end of October is Mardi Gras time in The City--a time when those outrageous fantasy-people we've kept hidden all year have permission to emerge and celebrate. Costume parties abound--and here are three of the best:

-The "infamous" Cross-Dress Party sponsored by San Francisco Sex Information, this year to be held at the Sutro Baths. They have invited the members of the Bi Center to join them on Saturday, October 20, at 9:00 PM. The $5.00 donation supports the work of the SFSI Switchboard.

-One week later, on Saturday, October 27, the Bi Center will become the home of hidden fantasies come true, with goblins, clowns, and queens in every corner. The festivities begin at 9:00 PM. Donation: $3.00 for Bi Center members, $5.00 non-members.

-Last, but far from least: on Halloween night, October 31, we will all meet here at the Bi Center at 7:30 PM, help each other get into costumes, and go together to join the revelry on Castro Street.

Let's make this Halloween a really joyous event. Come to one or all of the festivities, and bring your friends!

FLEA MARKET SALE

The Bi Center is having a gigantic "garage sale" at the Sausalito Flea Market, Sunday, September 23, all day, starting early in the morning, and lasting until 5:00 PM or so.

If you can help by donating items, please call Ken White at 922-3335 to set up a time to bring them to the Bi Center, or bring them to the Center on Tuesday evening, at 7:00 PM, before the Rap Group.

We also need help in transporting the sale items to Sausalito and "hanging out" there during the day. Call Marilyn King at 431-5513 if you can help with the sale.

BI-MONTHLY CALENDAR 1979

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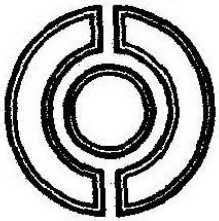

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